

BOOK REVIEW

Key Environments: Galapagos

*Edited by Roger Perry. Foreword by H.R.H. The Duke of Edinburgh.
Pergamon, 1984. 336 pp, 126 illus. £14.95. U.S. \$19.50*

I cannot remember who christened the Galapagos "the enchanted isles", but certainly their spell continues down the ages. One might have thought that so much had been written about them that yet another book would be superfluous. Yet this volume in an interesting new series sponsored by IUCN reminds one that old books are continually going out of date and that there is always something new to report.

No better editor could have been found than the former Director of the Charles Darwin Research Station, and he has assembled a team who include most of those who have made major contributions to our knowledge of the archipelago during the 20 years since the Station was inaugurated: among them, Simkin on geology, Houvenaghel on oceanography, Colinvaux on climate, Porter on flora, De Vries on the tortoises, Eibl-Eibesfeldt on the iguanas and sealions, Grant on landbirds and Harris on seabirds. The editor himself writes on the history, Bowman on Galapagos contributions to science, and conservation problems are dealt with by Juan Black, the present Secretary General of the Charles Darwin Foundation, and his predecessor G.T. Corley Smith. The illustrations are black and white photographs.

Successive governments of Ecuador deserve great credit for the support they have given during the past fifty years to the concept of conservation in the Galapagos. They have been very conscious of being the guardians of a major element in the world's scientific heritage, and ensured that the islands were among the first four World Heritage sites. Their partnership with the international scientific community, as Corley Smith points out, is unique, just as the islands themselves are in many ways unique.

Altogether the book provides a most valuable summary of the history, natural history, ecology and conservation of the Galapagos, and is now the essential reference book on the islands.

Richard Fitter

Chairman, Fauna and Flora Preservation Society

BRIEF NOTICES

Corals and Coral Reefs of the Galapagos Islands by Peter W. Glynn and Gerard M. Wellington, with an annotated list of the Scleractinian Corals of the Galapagos by John W. Wells, was published in 1983. (University of California Press, Berkeley, \$35.00, cloth).

Gerry Wellington, a Peace Corps volunteer, spent 2 years studying the underwater environment and produced a comprehensive plan for a Galapagos Marine Park, extracts from which were published in Noticias 24 and 25.

Galapagos Watercolours, by Godfrey William Merlen.

On the eve of the 150th anniversary of Charles Darwin's visit, Godfrey Merlen, who has worked as a naturalist guide in the Galapagos for the last four years, has put on sale a limited edition of prints of three of his watercolours — Galapagos Penguins, Flightless Cormorants and Great Frigatebirds, each 17" x 24". At least half the price is to be donated to the conservation work of the Darwin Research Station. Price per set of three: U.S.\$100, shipping (shipped flat) \$5. Correspondence: G. Merlen, P.O. Box 2542, Quito, Ecuador. Also available from University of Wisconsin Zoological Museum, 250 N. Mills Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53706.